

J. Matthew McInnis

Resident Fellow

Foreign and Defense Policy

American Enterprise Institute

Biography

J. Matthew McInnis is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, where he focuses on Iran, specifically on its foreign policies, intentions, decision making, strategic culture, and military power. He also works on US defense and regional security issues in the Middle East and on the effectiveness of the US intelligence community.

Before joining AEI, McInnis served for 15 years in senior leadership positions in the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), where he worked on Iran, Iraq, and the larger Middle East; counterproliferation; and East Asian security issues. Most notably, he was the senior expert for Iran at US Central Command from 2010 to 2013, directly advising Generals David Petraeus, John Allen, and James Mattis. In this capacity, he structured and created major initiatives within the US Department of Defense and the intelligence community to improve America's understanding of and ability to respond to Iranian military behavior and capabilities.

Previously, McInnis served as the Iran division chief and the senior intelligence officer for Iraq at the DIA. In 2006, he deployed for one year to Baghdad, where he led an analysis of the Iraqi government and security forces, Kurdish politics, Shi'a militias, and Iranian influence for the Multi-National Force-Iraq under Generals George Casey and Petraeus. He also served — at the beginning of the surge — as senior defense intelligence adviser to Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno, commanding general of Multi-National Corps Iraq.

At DIA, McInnis was staff director of the counterproliferation and Middle East offices, and an analyst and program manager for the China and East Asia office where he was the architect of the agency's first China intelligence strategy.

McInnis has a B.A. in international studies from Eckerd College, an M.A. in European studies from New York University, and an M.A. in international relations from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.